Title
What is Wisdom? Cross-Cultural and Cross-Disciplinary Syntheses

Journal
Review of General Psychology, 19(3)

ISSN
1089-2680

Author
Walsh, Roger

Publication Date
2015-09-01

DOI
10.1037/gpr0000045

Peer reviewed

Review of General Psychology

What Is Wisdom? Cross-Cultural and Cross-Disciplinary Syntheses

Roger Walsh

Online First Publication, June 8, 2015. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000045

Review of General Psychology

1089-2680/15/$12.00 http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000045

What Is Wisdom? Cross-Cultural and Cross-Disciplinary Syntheses

Roger Walsh
University of California Medical School

This article explores the nature of wisdom using an integrative cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approach by drawing on contemporary research as well as the philosophical and contemplative disciplines of both East and West. To do this the article first analyzes definitional issues. These issues include difficulties of definition in general, and of wisdom in particular, the common elements and limitations of current definitions, as well as possible varieties or subtypes of wisdom. It then uses integrative definitions of wisdom and its major subtypes as a framework to investigate the characteristics, capacities, and components of wisdom; the varieties of self-knowledge that foster and constitute it; the perceptual, cognitive, and developmental processes essential to it; and the existential issues—for example, meaning, mystery, suffering, and death—that wisdom ponders and responds to. The article then examines wisdom's intimate link with other virtues, especially ethics and benevolence, and questions the claim that emotional regulation is an inherent element of wisdom, arguing instead that emotional regulation and wisdom are distinct, yet mutually facilitating virtues. Finally, the article provides evidence for the "self-demanding" nature of wisdom which implies that to understand it fully we may need to cultivate it ourselves.

Keywords: contemplative, cross-cultural, emotional regulation, existential, wisdom

Twenty-five hundred years ago in the great civilizations of the time, the quest for wisdom lay at the heart of intellectual life, and it continued as a central theme for many centuries. Yet only in the late 20th century did the first tentative psychological explorations begin.

This neglect of wisdom is understandable in light of the many difficulties in comprehending and researching it. However, this neglect is also tragic because most major problems in our modern world reflect the need for wisdom. In fact, as the power of technology increases, so too does the need for wisdom, and it is no exaggeration to say that humankind is in a race between sagacity and catastrophe. As Robert Sternberg (2003), former president of the American Psychological Association, warned, "if there is anything the world needs, it is wisdom. Without it, I exaggerate not at all in saying that very soon there may be no world" (p. xviii). Obviously wisdom deserves a far more central place in Western culture and psychology.

Fortunately there is growing interest in wisdom, and the number of psychological publications increased sevenfold from the 1970s to 2008 (Meeks & Jeste, 2009). Reviews are now available on general wisdom (Baltes, 2004; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Brugman, 2000; Staudinger & Glück, 2011; Sternberg & Jordan, 2005) as well as on varieties or subtypes (Trowbridge & Ferrari, 2011; Walsh, 2011a, 2012) including personal and practical wisdom (Ferrari & Weststrate, 2014; Küpers & Pauleen, 2013; Staudinger, 2014). Measurement scales have been compared (Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste, 2013; Glück et al., 2013), and diverse perspectives have been applied to wisdom such as cross-cultural (Yao, 2006; Walsh, 2014b), philosophical (Curnow, 1999; Cooper, 2012), gender (Aldwin, 2009), and integral synthetic perspectives (Walsh & Reams, 2015). These have also been reviews of the implications of wisdom for aging (Sternberg, 2005), psychotherapy (Germer & Siegel, 2012), and education (Bassett, 2011; Ferrari & Potworowski, 2008; Maxwell, 2014; Steele, 2014; Trowbridge, 2007).

Conceptual Fuzziness

However, despite this burst of interest, there is still considerable fuzziness and debate about what exactly the construct of wisdom refers to. Multiple definitions have been advanced, diverse measurement scales designed, and several varieties or subtypes of wisdom suggested. Yet definitions overlap only partly, and correlations between wisdom scales are modest (most are less than 0.3; Gluck et al., 2013). There is also debate over where wisdom is to be found, whether primarily in texts and cultural products (Baltes, 2004) or in people (Ardelt, 2004), though integral theory may offer a resolution to this debate (Walsh, 2012).

Moreover, research has focused almost exclusively on practical wisdom, and has largely overlooked the kinds of wisdom that are the focus of classical and contemplative traditions of both East and West (Walsh, 2014a). We are still, as Richard Trowbridge (2011) titled an article, "Waiting for Sophia."

The Aims of This Article

This article aims to explore the nature of wisdom by using an integrative, cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary perspective. To do this the article first analyzes definitional issues including difficulties of definition in general, and of wisdom in particular, as well as the commonalities and limitations of current definitions.

The article then proceeds to offer novel definitions of wisdom and its major subtypes. The aim (and claim) is not to unveil the

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Roger Walsh, Psychiatry Department, University of California Medical School, Irvine CA 92697-1675. E-mail: rwalsh@uci.edu

ONE TRUE definition. That is neither possible nor practical. It is not possible because the Aristotelian idea of an essential nature that can be captured in one true definition has been devastatingly critiqued (Popper, 1962). It is not practical because different definitions can highlight different facets of phenomena and suggest different research agendas (Maxwell, 2014). An analogy is the extremely productive field of intelligence research where a major 1921 symposium generated 14 different definitions, and more have followed (Ferrari & Weststrate, 2014).

However, it is claimed that the new definitions offered here are integrative and fruitful. They are integrative because they integrate valuable elements of previous definitions, not only from psychology, but also from Western and non-Western psychological and philosophical disciplines. They also encompass major wisdom subtypes.

The definitions are fruitful because, as will be seen, they provide a valuable framework for the systematic investigation of characteristics, capacities, and components of wisdom; the developmental, perceptual, and cognitive processes essential to it; the existential issues that wisdom explores, as well as links to other virtues, especially ethics and benevolence. The major part of this article is devoted to a systematic investigation of these and other features of wisdom.

The Difficulties of Definition

Defining anything adequately is challenging. With wisdom, the definitional challenges are even greater than usual, and we can divide these challenges into two types: general definitional problems, and those specific to wisdom.

General Definitional Difficulties: The Limits of Language

Philosophers have debated definitional issues for centuries, and even today lament that, in the words of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* "The problems of definition are constantly recurring . . . no problems of knowledge are less settled than those of definition" (Abelson, 2006, p. 664). In fact the French philosopher Jacques Derrida argued that "nearly every term is an *aporia*" (an irreducible puzzle) that "admits of no settled solution or clear resolution" (Crockett, 2001, p. 16).

Eastern philosophies agree. One of the central themes of Buddhist *Madhyamika* philosophy is that all phenomena are *shunyata*: a difficult term to translate, but implying that all phenomena are inherently transconceptual (Gyamtso, 1986). Likewise Radhakrishnan (1989), one of India's greatest philosophers and also its second president, pointed to "the inadequacy of all intellectual categories" (p. 36). Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism, put it poetically:

> Existence is beyond the power of words to define:
>
> Terms may be used but none of them are absolute. (Bynner, 1980, p. 25)

So defining wisdom, or anything else for that matter, turns out to be a deep linguistic challenge. We cannot expect absolute certainty or agreement from our terms nor from our definitions. However, we can try to use them carefully and skillfully, remembering that, as the philosopher Huston Smith (1958) put it, "all human thought proceeds from words. As long as words are askew, thought cannot be straight" (p. 182).

Definitional Difficulties Specific to Wisdom

Specific challenges in defining wisdom stem from its complexity, profundity, and variety. In wisdom, we are investigating "perhaps the most complex characteristic that can be attributed to individuals or cultures" (Birren & Svensson, 2005, p. 28). It involves multiple capacities and is closely linked to other virtues such as ethics and benevolence (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Walsh, 2014a). In fact, both Eastern and Western views idealize wisdom as "the perfect integration of mind and character for the greater good" (Staudinger & Glück, 2011, p. 221).

Wisdom is also profound. It implies, for example, rare degrees of insight and maturity, and both contemplatives and researchers therefore suggest an intimate link with development (e.g., Aurobindo, 1970; Kramer, 2003). Consequently, an adequate definition of wisdom needs to integrate a developmental perspective as well as the associated virtues of ethics and benevolence.

A further complexity is that there appear to be several subtypes or kinds of wisdom(s) which operate in distinctive ways (Walsh, 2011b). Historical examples include Greek philosophy's classic division of sagacity into two kinds: *sophia* and *phronesis* (theoretical and practical; Curnow, 1999). However, contemporary researchers often ignore *sophia* and overlook distinctions of any kind (Trowbridge, 2010, 2011), or sometimes implicitly accept the venerable Greek distinction even though it has major problems. For example, the exact nature of both *sophia* and *phronesis*, as well as the distinctions between them, are unclear. The terms have been imprecisely defined, ambiguously used, and employed in different ways (Curnow, 1999).

Buddhism makes an analogous distinction between *prajna* and *upaya* (transconceptual and practical wisdoms; Ray, 2000). Buddhism also distinguishes between two further kinds of wisdom: mundane and supramundane (Case, 2013). Mundane wisdom is based on everyday experience. However, supramundane wisdom derives from experiences and insights available only to people who train the mind through contemplative practices so as to develop exceptionally refined levels of "keenness, subtlety, and quickness of cognitive response"; Nyanaponika, 1976, p. 7).

Several contemporary researchers also distinguish different subtypes or varieties of wisdom. Assmann (1994) offered four historical prototypes. These appear to primarily exemplify variants of practical wisdom. Staudinger and Gluck (2011) distinguish between personal and general wisdom. For them, personal wisdom refers to self-understanding and personal life management, whereas general wisdom refers to life insight and an understanding of existential issues which allow skillful advice and help to others. A new scale, The Bremen Measure of Personal Wisdom—which is a personal analogue of The Berlin (general) Wisdom measure—offers initial support for a distinction between personal and general wisdom (Staudinger, 2014). Clinicians might argue that a major difference between personal and general wisdom is that psychological defenses arise strongly when personal issues are involved.

Walsh (2011a, 2014b) presented an analysis suggesting that we need to distinguish at least four subtypes of wisdom. These four differ, not only in their area of application, but also in the cognitive processes which give rise to them. One of these four subtypes is

practical (responding to life issues), whereas the other three—intuitive, conceptual, and transconceptual—are epistemic (knowledge concerning life issues). These varieties are introduced here—especially transconceptual wisdom which psychologists are probably least familiar with—and then defined more precisely after reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of previous wisdom definitions.

Some wisdom is largely intuitive, in both its acquisition and expression. An emphasis on intuition in wisdom occurs in layperson descriptions, contemplative disciplines, Eastern and Western philosophies, Robert Sternberg's balance theory, and studies of ethical decision making (Feuerstein, 2014; Osbeck & Robinson, 2005; Rogerson et al., 2011; Sternberg, 1998). Intuition may result in tacit knowledge that the person having it cannot easily conceptualize or formulate, and Sternberg (1998) considers "Tacit knowledge as the core of wisdom" (p. 351). Perhaps the classic example of intuitive wisdom is the wise grandmother: a person who may have little formal education or intellectual sophistication, but to whom people turn for advice about difficult life issues.

Yet some wisdom obviously can be conceptualized, otherwise we would have no wise books or teachers. So epistemic wisdom(s) can include both tacit and explicit knowledge, both intuitive insights and conceptual understandings. Consequently we need to distinguish at least two kinds or subtypes of epistemic wisdom: intuitive and conceptual (Walsh, 2011a). The classic example of conceptual wisdom is the philosopher-sage: a person with both deep insight and an intellectually sophisticated understanding of life issues.

However, contemplative disciplines and non-Western philosophies include a further category: transconceptual wisdom. Contemplative disciplines are those traditions found the world over, often in conjunction with the world's major religions, that focus on mental training disciplines such as meditation, contemplation, and yoga, along with supportive practices such as ethics, lifestyle, community, instruction, reflection, and service to others (Walsh, 2014c). Contemplative disciplines claim that their practices can cultivate psychological development as well as specific mental capacities—for example, mindfulness, concentration, calm, and clarity—to exceptional degrees, and considerable research now supports some of these claims (For reviews see Hempel & Shekelle, 2014; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009; Walsh, 2014c; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006).

These practices aim to foster maturation to transpersonal stages of development and states of mind that culminate in radically transformative insights into self and reality (Brown, 2006; Goleman, 1977; Shapiro, 2014; Wilber, 2006; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986). These insights are said to yield a radically distinct transconceptual, transrational, or transcendental type of wisdom which involves a direct apprehension of the fundamental nature of self and reality. Transconceptual wisdom is widely recognized and valued across contemplative traditions the world over, and is known, for example, as *prajna* (Buddhism), *jnana* (Hinduism), *ma'rifa* (Islam), *gnosis* (Christianity), and *zhi* (Neo-Confucianism; Kohn, 2014, p. 141; Ray, 2000; Shah-Kazemi, 2002; Walsh, 2014a).

Experimental support for the distinctive nature and effects of transconceptual wisdom comes from Rorschach studies of Buddhist meditation teachers who had attained initial levels of enlightenment. In classic Buddhism, enlightenment is defined by the realization of transconceptual insight known as cessation or nirvana (Goleman, 1988), and these enlightened practitioners had distinctive Rorschach patterns very different from practitioners at earlier stages (Brown & Engler, 1986).

So far we have differentiated three distinct kinds of epistemic wisdom: intuitive, conceptual, and transconceptual. Further evidence for differentiating them comes from the fact that some contemplative disciplines use specific practices to cultivate each one, and do so using a specific sequence. For example, in yoga, a practitioner first listens to (*sravana*), then reflects on (*manana*) teachings to develop conceptual understanding. Next the practitioner meditates on them (*nididhyasana*) to develop a deeper intuitive apprehension, and finally enters a state of unwavering concentration (*samadhi*) in which transconceptual wisdom (*jnana*) arises (Feuerstein, 2014).

Other traditions have developed similar multifaceted progressive wisdom trainings. For example, for "learning to be a sage" (Gardner, 1990), Neo-Confucianism recommends alternating between studying, pondering (reflection), and "quiet sitting." Likewise, the Christian contemplative practice of *lectio divina* begins with reading (*lectio*), continues with conceptual reflection (*meditatio*), and culminates in interior silence and insight (*contemplatio*) that becomes "too deep for words" (Hall, 1988).

Classic Buddhist wisdom training involves a similar progression from listening to reflection to *vipassana* (insight) meditation (Walsh, 2014a). Tibetan Buddhism adds two further steps. The first is realization or initial enlightenment which requires transconceptual insight. The second is "integration into one's mind stream" whereby implications of this realization are assimilated (Brown, 2014). This is an example of the idea that once transconceptual insights occur, they can then become objects of reflection and thereby foster conceptual wisdom (Goleman, 1977). Different kinds of wisdom may therefore be mutually facilitative.

Are there further varieties or subtypes of wisdom to be recognized? Quite possibly. In time, wisdom may be seen as a multifaceted, multidimensional, and multilevel skill whose precise makeup and functioning vary across individuals, situations, trainings, and tasks.

In summary, the classical Western division of all wisdom into two categories of *sophia* and *phronesis* is insufficiently precise (Curnow, 1999). Cross-cultural, contemplative, philosophical, phenomenological, and experimental evidence suggests that we need to recognize distinct subtypes or varieties of wisdom and that different trainings may foster specific subtypes. Future research will doubtless add further refinements, but for now the multiform nature of wisdom needs to be acknowledged in definitions and research.

Experimental Testing of Contemplative Claims

If contemplative traditions have developed specific practices to cultivate all three kinds of epistemic wisdom then this is obviously of enormous importance. Experimental testing of contemplative practices such as meditation to determine their effects on wisdom scores deserves to be prioritized for several reasons. First, we have cross-cultural claims that meditation fosters wisdom, plus the fact that one of the few studies of wisdom exemplars found that 60% of them practiced meditation (Krafcik, 2015). Second, considerable research demonstrates that meditation fosters other psycho-

logical capacities and virtues (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009). Indeed, advanced meditators have already demonstrated 12 capacities which psychologists once believed were impossible ranging from lucid dreaming to perceptual hypersensitivity to controlling the startle response (Walsh, 2014c). Finally, we have painfully little experimental evidence for the effectiveness of any sapiential practices despite how urgently needed such practices are for educational, psychotherapeutic, and other settings (Germer & Siegel, 2012; Maxwell, 2014).

Meditation research will include six distinct families of experiments:

1. The first will assess the effects of long term (weeks or months) practice on wisdom scale scores. The prediction is for increased scores.

2. Next will be a comparison of the effects of long term meditation on different scale measures with the expectation that meditation may affect some measures more than others. For example, the Adult Self–Transcendence Inventory (Levenson, Jennings, Aldwin, & Shiraishi, 2005) may show greater effects than other scales.

3. Whereas long term meditation may *cultivate* wisdom, it is possible that a single session before testing may *activate* wisdom, as do dialogue and certain visualizations (Stange & Kunzmann, 2008). An elegant 2 × 2 design would couple long-term meditation followed by half of the meditators and controls having a single session before testing. The prediction is that both long- and short-term practice will elevate scores.

4. Another family of experiments will compare the effects of different kinds of meditation. Not all meditations are created equal. For example, some are designed to foster insight, others to train concentration, still others to cultivate beneficial emotions such as love or compassion (Walsh, 2014c). While multiple kinds of meditations may enhance wisdom scores, insight practices may be most effective.

5. A fifth family of studies will assess the time course of the effects of meditation on the development of wisdom. Long-term meditation will probably be more effective than short-term practice—as has been found for a variety of psychological capacities (Walsh, 2014a)—though the exact nature of the temporal profile remains to be seen.

6. When measures are created to assess different kinds of wisdom then we may find differential effects of meditation on them. For example, personal wisdom may develop more quickly than general wisdom, intuitive more quickly than conceptual, and significant amounts of transrational wisdom may be found only in advanced long term practitioners.

Hopefully, a research program such as this will provide evidence for millennia old claims for the ability of meditation and related contemplative practices to foster wisdoms. If so, it will be a landmark in wisdom studies.

Characteristics and Commonalities of Definitions

Given the abundance of definitions of wisdom, an obvious question arises: What commonalities do they share? Meeks and Jeste (2009) sought to answer that question by reviewing 10 definitions and descriptions and found six recurring elements. These six are (a) prosocial attitudes and behaviors, (b) social decision making/pragmatic knowledge of life, (c) emotional homeostasis, (d) reflection/self-understanding, (e) value relativism/tolerance, and (f) acknowledgment of, and dealing effectively with uncertainty and ambiguity. A subsequent review found three additional though less frequently mentioned elements: openness to new experience, spirituality, and sense of humor (Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste, 2013).

However, Western and non-Western philosophical and contemplative definitions were not considered. From surveying these and psychological definitions, I would suggest a further common component: "perspicacity," which the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "keenness of sight . . . clearness of understanding; great perception, discernment."

Perspicacity connotes perceptual and cognitive clarity, discernment, and depth which result in deep, accurate insight. Perspicacity is alluded to in contemporary psychological definitions and descriptions and also in both Western and non-Western philosophies. Psychological examples include McKee and Barber (1999) who define wisdom as "seeing through illusions," whereas Caroline Bassett (2011) claims that "Wisdom is having sufficient awareness in various situations and contexts to act in ways that enhance our common humanity" (p. 36). Likewise, Ardelt, Achenbaum, and Oh (2014, p. 267) suggest that wisdom allows one to "see through illusions and projections and discover what lies beyond surface appearances."

Perspicacity or clear seeing is also a recurrent theme in contemplative and non-Western definitions and discussions. For example, Buddhist *vipassana* (insight) meditation aims to refine perceptual clarity since "Wisdom involves seeing things as they are" (Dalai Lama, 2012, p. xvii). Similarly, the Christian contemplative Hugh of St. Victor suggested that "wisdom is the comprehension of things just as they are" (Trowbridge, 2005, p. 44). The same idea is found in the branch of yoga that specifically focuses on wisdom (*jnana yoga*), where the first of the four principle practices is discernment (Feuerstein, 1998, p. 43). Interestingly, classic claims that contemplative practices such as meditation and yoga enhance perceptual sensitivity and accuracy have recently received considerable experimental support (e.g., Cahn & Polich, 2006; MacLean et al., 2010).

Common Problematic Features of Definitions

Just as there are common elements among definitions, there are also common problems. These include especially the following five:

1. A partial focus on only one specific kind or subtype of wisdom. This is usually practical wisdom (e.g., Sternberg, 1998), which is easiest to conceptualize and operationalize. Trowbridge and Ferrari (2011) devoted a whole journal issue to this problem.

2. Several definitions include only one element or process of wisdom, such as perception (McKee & Barber, 1999) or self-transcendence (Levenson et al., 2005).

3. Many definitions are insufficiently precise, beginning with Cicero's statement—which became for many centuries "perhaps the standard definition"—that wisdom is "knowledge of things human and divine" (Trowbridge, 2010, p. 61).

The problem continues to the present day. For example, several contemporary definitions argue that wisdom arises from an "integration" of capacities. Suggested capacities include emotion and cognition, or "an unusually integrated personality structure" (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990, p. 160). Likewise, Ardelt (2004) claims that "wisdom is "an integration of cognitive, reflective, and affective personality characteristics" (p. 274).

But what does "integration" mean? The hypotheses are none too specific. Presumably integration implies some sort of facilitative harmonious interaction between capacities, but none of the hypotheses specify this. For a discussion of possible kinds of integration see Walsh (2011a). Equally problematic is the fact that not just wisdom but several virtues probably involve some kind of integration of these capacities and personality characteristics.

4. Several definitions omit crucial elements. For example, there is widespread agreement across both Western and non-Western philosophies and religions as well as many contemporary researchers that benevolence is an essential element of wisdom (Staudinger & Glück, 2011; Walsh, 2014a). But this component is missing in several definitions (e.g., McKee & Barber, 1999; Ardelt, 2004). To be fair, some authors who omit altruism in their definitions include it in discussions (e.g., Ardelt, 2004; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

5. Many definitions include elements—such as nonattachment, compassion, and emotional regulation—that may actually be distinct virtues. For example, I will later argue that emotional regulation is a separate, distinct virtue in its own right which certainly complements wisdom. However, including it as an inherent component of wisdom may be an erroneous conflation.

Common Features of Definitions Revisited

Given the preceding points, we may need a modified list of definitional commonalities. After adding perspicacity to the original six, and questioning emotional regulation, we have the following list of common features of wisdom definitions:

- Prosocial attitudes and behaviors
- Social decision making/pragmatic knowledge of life
- Reflection/self-understanding
- Value relativism/tolerance
- Recognition of and effectiveness with uncertainty and ambiguity
- Perspicacity
- (Emotional homeostasis?)

Novel Definitions and Their Analysis

I would now like to advance novel definitions of wisdom and its subtypes. Again, these definitions are clearly not the only valid or valuable ones. However, they do confer several benefits such as offering a synthesis of definitional elements from diverse disciplines and cultures, and in providing a fruitful framework for a multidisciplinary, multicultural exploration of wisdom. We begin with a definition of general wisdom:

> Wisdom is deep accurate insight and understanding of oneself and the central existential issues of life, plus skillful benevolent responsiveness.

Let's examine this definition closely to investigate the nature of wisdom.

Insight

First, wisdom is *deep, accurate insight*: We have seen that there may be several subtypes of wisdom. These include Staudinger's (2014) personal and general types, as well as Walsh's (2011a, 2014b) four varieties: one practical and three epistemic. The three epistemic types—intuitive, conceptual, and transconceptual—rely primarily on intuitive insight, conceptual understanding, and transconceptual insight respectively. Fortunately, the term *insight* encompasses all three, and *deep accurate insight* is an aspect of perspicacity which is one of the common features of wisdom definitions.

However, insight can vary in depth. Hence the emphasis is on *deep* insight. This raises an obvious question: "What makes an insight deep?" We can say that an insight is deeper if it sees more clearly and sensitively, and therefore more penetratingly, fundamentally, and foundationally. Wisdom sees below surfaces and superficialities to recognize deeper realities, meanings, and implications. These depths remain hidden to cursory examination and are recognizable only by those who are developmentally ready to recognize and appreciate them, that is, to those who possess the necessary *adaequatio* (Schumacher, 1977, p. 30; Wilber, 2006).

Insights and wisdom can deepen, not only in individuals as they mature, but also in disciplines as they evolve. For example, across the centuries Buddhist contemplatives unveiled successively deeper insights, understood wisdom in deeper ways, and formulated corresponding increasingly sophisticated philosophies (Ray, 2000). Today, meditators recapitulate this evolution by practicing "progressive stages of meditation" (Gyamtso, 1986).

Accurate insight and understanding have long been regarded as essential for wisdom. In fact, the two disciplines—contemplation and philosophy—that traditionally focused on the cultivation of wisdom are also the two that focus on cultivating deep, accurate insight and understanding of oneself and existential issues. Contemporary depth psychotherapy shares similar goals (Germer & Siegel, 2012).

A central theme of all three traditions is that our ordinary insight and understanding are inaccurate in usually unrecognized ways, and that this results in diverse kinds of suffering and unfulfilling ways of life (Yalom, 1980). For example, contemplative traditions regard our usual mind state as unclear, illusory, and lost in a "consensus trance" (Tart, 2001), whereas existential psychology and philosophy suggest that conventional, unreflective lifestyles

are marked by problems such as inauthenticity, alienation, and "herd mentality" (Cooper, 1990). Additional support for these philosophical, contemplative, and psychotherapeutic claims for prevalent distortions of insight and self-understanding comes from the emerging field of self-knowledge studies (Vazire & Wilson, 2012).

Consequently, contemplative practices aim to clarify awareness and see through illusions so that eventually, in the words of a classic Hindu text, "all illusions vanish. The veil falls, and you see clearly" (Byrom, 2001, p. 51). For example, Buddhist *vipassana* (insight) meditation aims to refine perceptual clarity and thereby cultivate wisdom since "Wisdom involves seeing things as they are" (Dalai Lama, 2012, p. xvii). As mentioned, considerable research supports claims that contemplative practices enhance perceptual sensitivity and accuracy (MacLean et al., 2010; Walsh, 2014c).

Several contemplative traditions offer vivid visual images of the intimate relationship between wisdom and clarifying awareness. Buddhist iconography displays Manjusri, the archetype of wisdom, brandishing a flaming sword with which he cuts through illusions and their underlying delusions (Ray, 2000). Likewise, the classic Taoist sage Lu Tung-pin is shown carrying a broom with which he "sweeps away the dust that covers the reality of the Tao" (Wong, 1997, p. 156).

Philosophy uses conceptual analysis to cut through fuzzy thinking and provide increasingly deep, accurate understanding. The traditional goal was to support *philosophia*—the love of wisdom—a goal which contemporary Western philosophy largely forfeited (McDermott, 2014), but which still lives on at the heart of Eastern and contemplative philosophies. In these philosophies, deep accurate insight and understanding are sought to cultivate both wisdom and other virtues (Feuerstein, 2014; Kalton, 2014). The relationship between wisdom and perceptual clarity suggests that wise people might use mature psychological defenses because these defenses distort perception least, and George Vaillant (2003) found evidence of this in his study of successful aging.

Understanding

Intuitive and transconceptual insight may be foundational for some wisdom (Curnow, 1999). However, insight can be enriched by subsequent conceptual understanding which informs and frames insights, links them together, and thereby creates meaning. Therefore, the definitions offered here indicate that wisdom in general, and conceptual wisdom in particular, are a function of the accuracy, richness, profundity, and integration of conceptual understandings.

The definition's emphasis on degrees of depth implies that development is central to wisdom. Insight and understanding must mature for wisdom to flower (Gyamtso, 1986), and contemplative traditions foster the maturation of insight and understanding through systematic programs of, for example, study, reflection, dialogue, and meditation (Buxbaum, 2005; Goldstein, 1987; Walsh, 1999).

Integrative capacities are crucial to insight and understanding, and these capacities can also mature. Two kinds of integration may be particularly important for developing wisdom: the integration of perspectives and of concepts. The capacity to recognize and integrate more perspectives—and thereby adopt increasingly encompassing metaperspectives—increases with development (Fuhs, 2010) and may be essential to psychological maturity, health, and wisdom (Walsh, 2015).

Similarly for concepts. The ability to link insights and ideas into increasingly complex, accurate, and integrated networks or schemas of ideas may to be essential for cognitive development and psychological health (Beck & Weishaar, 2011; Cook-Greuter, 2010), and presumably for wisdom. When cognitive development proceeds to postformal operational levels it appears to confer new integrative abilities in which further relationships among concepts, or even thought systems, can be recognized (Wilber, 2006). These mature integrative capacities have been variously described as dialectical, creative-synthetic, systematic and metasystematic operations, vision logic, and the higher-mind (Aurobindo, 1970; Commons & Richards, 2003; Wilber, 2006). Jewish contemplatives describe the "mentality of adulthood" (*mochin de-gadluth*) and claim that "One learns these methods of "adult thought" through meditation" (Kaplan, 1985, p. 8).

Each term suggests a possible feature of postformal integrative abilities, and several researchers have linked these abilities to wisdom (e.g., Kramer, 2003; Commons & Richards, 2003). Interestingly, a comparative Rorschach study of three recognized contemplative masters from different traditions—shamanic, Buddhist, and Hindu—found a uniquely integrative response style in all of them (Jonte-Pace, 2004).

If the ability to recognize and integrate relationships between concepts (and even systems of concepts) is a feature of conceptual wisdom, then presumably wisdom will foster and be fostered by development to postformal operational levels (Kramer, 2003; Walsh, 2011a). There are many reasons to assume that wisdom is intimately linked to psychological development, and the emphasis on *deep* insight and understanding is intended to imply this assumption in the definition.

However, a note of caution is in order. In his study of wisdom exemplars, Krafcik (2015) found only modest elevations of ego development scores. Maturity and wisdom may be mutually facilitating, but clearly some people at or only slightly above average levels of maturity may be deemed wise by others. A valuable study would be to examine the effects of meditation, which enhances moral development (Walsh, 2014c), on development and wisdom scores and the relationship between them.

Defining Subtypes of Wisdom

At this stage we can define and discuss several subcategories of wisdom:

- ***Intuitive wisdom*** is deep, accurate intuitive insight into oneself and the central existential issues of life. The term intuition is often used in several ways but is used here to indicate rapid, automatic, implicit information processing (Kahneman, 2003).
- ***Conceptual wisdom*** is deep accurate understanding of oneself and the central existential issues of life.

Of course, these definitions can be expanded to add more detail and precision. For example, in light of the previous examination of conceptual understanding, we could expand the definition of conceptual wisdom as follows:

- ***Conceptual wisdom*** is deep, accurate, rich, and integrated understanding of oneself and the central existential issues of life.

We can define transconceptual wisdom as follows:

Transconceptual wisdom is deep transconceptual insight into oneself and the nature of reality.

Note that the definitions of intuitive and transconceptual wisdom are not circular even though a term is repeated in each of them. This is because the repeated terms (intuitive and transconceptual) are used to refer to two distinct phenomena: the kind of wisdom being defined, and the process generating the wisdom.

Notice that with transconceptual wisdom the insight is primarily into specific and fundamental existential issues such as reality and identity. That is because the altered states of consciousness—such as *satori* (zen), *samadhi* (yoga), *fana* (Sufism), *ayin* (Judaism), and "the great pure realm" (Taoism)—in which transconceptual insight arises, are said to offer a direct apprehension of the fundamental nature of reality and identity, rather than of secondary issues such as, for example, relationships or aging (Goleman, 1988; Wong, 1992).

However, this transconceptual apprehension can subsequently become the object of reflection and conceptualization, and thereby generate conceptual understanding and wisdom. For example, Buddhist *vipassana* (insight) meditation culminates in a moment of transconceptual awareness called cessation or nirvana. "However, immediately following this, the 'fruition' moment occurs, when the meditators' mind reflects on the experience of nirvana just past" (Goleman, 1977, p. 31). Then the many implications that this new insight into the nature of reality and identity holds for other existential issues—such as life meaning, purpose, and priorities—become apparent and are conceptualized. The result is a deepening of first transconceptual and then conceptual wisdom.

Presumably personal wisdom includes deep, accurate insight and understanding of oneself (Staudinger, 2014). However, it may include less insight and understanding of universal existential issues, and less benevolent responses.

Insight and Understanding of Oneself

> Applicants for wisdom.
>
> Do what I have done: inquire within.
>
> Heraclitus, Pre-Socratic philosopher ~500 BCE. (2001, p. 51)

Returning to the general definition of wisdom, the next question is: "deep accurate insight and understanding of what?" The first answer is "*of oneself*."

The idea that self-knowledge—especially direct, experiential self-knowledge—is essential for wisdom is an enduring theme in both East and West. "Know thyself" is an ancient maxim, best known in the West as the advice adorning the temple of the Delphic oracle. However, self-knowledge is also a central goal of Asian philosophies, contemplative disciplines, and contemporary depth psychotherapies (Goleman, 1977; Yalom, 1980; Walsh, 2014c). Although the specific kinds of insight vary, the general principle is that insight and self-understanding can produce multiple benefits including psychological health and maturity, classic virtues, and wisdom (Goldstein, 1987; Goleman, 1977; Yalom, 1980). In his broad historical and cross-cultural survey, Trevor Curnow (1999) concludes that self-knowledge is central to both the cultivation and nature of wisdom.

However, the methods used vary widely. In the West, traditional approaches included reflection (e.g., Marcus Aurelius), contemplation (e.g., the Desert Fathers), and moral dialectic, which is dialogue aimed at mutual edification (e.g., Socrates & Seneca; Curnow, 1999). In the modern world, major approaches include depth psychotherapies as well as contemplative practices such as meditation and yoga (Germer & Siegel, 2012).

Many contemplative disciplines place a premium on self-knowledge. For example, in Confucianism, "self-reflection and personal introspective examination are constantly practiced as part of the daily routine" (Wei-ming, 1993, p. 198). Likewise in Buddhism, Dogen (1988), the 13th century founder of Soto Zen, claimed that "To study the Buddha way is to study the self" (p. 70). The central methods are reflection and meditation, and the 18th century Jewish sage, Rabbi Nachman even claimed that "A person who does not meditate cannot have wisdom" (Kaplan, 1982, p. 311).

The Varieties of Self-Knowledge

Self-knowledge may be a common goal but the kinds of self-knowledge sought and attained vary widely. In fact, they vary so widely that a complete survey would require a complete article. In addition, not all kinds of self-knowledge constitute significant wisdom. Therefore, our focus here will be on the deeper insights and understandings unveiled by contemplative disciplines, and also by depth psychotherapies, since wisdom is an implicit through usually unacknowledged goal of such therapies (Germer & Siegel, 2012).

Among depth therapies, common goals are to (a) recognize one's strengths, weaknesses, and personality, (b) understand the mind and its functioning, (c) recognize and release psychodynamic defenses and erroneous beliefs which reduce and distort self-awareness, and (d) recognize, accept, and integrate formerly unacceptable and unconscious materials (Corsini & Wedding, 2014). The general goal has been given many names such as actualization (Goldstein), self-actualization (Maslow), authenticity (existentialism), and individuation (Jung; Yalom, 1980; Wilber, 2000). All imply that self-knowledge enhances personal maturity and healthy functioning, although there is debate over the extent to which "positive illusions" may enhance some functions (Vazire & Wilson, 2012).

However, when we turn to contemplative traditions we find something very different. Here the goal is not so much actualizing the personal self (which is seen as a limited and distorted self-representation), but rather recognition of and identification with a deeper transpersonal Self, a Self which is intimately linked to the Whole, and which can be known but is difficult to describe in words (i.e., it is transconceptual; Curnow, 1999; Harvey, 1996; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986). Recognition of this deeper transpersonal Self and identifying with it—rather than with the self-representation (self-concept, self-image, ego), which was formerly assumed to be who and what one was—is said to be not only healing but also liberating and enlightening, and is a core realization of transconceptual wisdom (Goleman, 1977; Walsh, 2014a). "This supreme self cannot be realized" states a classic yoga text "by means other than wisdom" (Venkatesananda, 1984, p. 43). The

extent to which the Self so recognized is similar across contemplative disciplines is a matter of debate (e.g., Forman, 1990), but common aspects are clearly recognizable (Wilber, 2006).

Clearly, different methods of introspection lead to different kinds of self-knowledge, benefits, and possibly wisdom. However, this is not, as it might first appear, an epistemological and theoretical nightmare. Rather, it is exactly as expected from postmodern epistemological theory which has demolished the so called "myth of the given" that assumes we can find a single world (and self) independent of our methodological, cultural, cognitive, and developmental perspectives (Wilber, 2006). Moreover, both individual researchers and integral theory suggest that different kinds of self/Self-realization can be partly understood in terms of variables such as states of consciousness (Tart, 2001), levels of the unconscious (Grof, 1993), and stages of development (Wilber, 2006).

The quest for self-knowledge is neither personally nor conceptually easy. However, it is so important that many of humankind's greatest intellectual and contemplative geniuses have regarded it as a central life goal and as a royal road to wisdom (Walsh, 2014a). "Hence" concludes a major yoga text, "one should apply oneself constantly to self-knowledge" (Venkatesananda, 1984, p. 32), or as Heraclitus urged, "All people ought to know themselves" (2001, p. 71).

The Central Existential Issues of Life

Self-knowledge is essential for sagacity, but so too is deep, accurate insight and understanding of *the central existential issues of life*. So what are these? Existential issues are dilemmas that we all face, simply by virtue of our existence as human beings (Cooper, 1990). Central existential issues include, for example, questions about the fundamental nature of identity and reality; the challenge of having an aging, mortal body; confronting suffering, sickness, and death; living in personal and social relationships with others; constructing meaning and purpose in an apparently meaningless and mysterious world; selecting values and morals and then living up to them; and facing endless choices for which we alone are responsible (Yalom, 1980). As Holliday and Chandler (1986) concluded, "wisdom problems are problems that are endemic to life and to the human condition" (p. 90).

Wisdom sees clearly, deeply, and defenselessly into these issues, and thereby recognizes their complexity, mystery, and inescapability (McDermott, 2014). For example, it sees—as both existentialists and contemplatives emphasize—that life is endlessly mysterious, knowledge is never complete, and the future is largely unpredictable. In philosophical terms, this is the recognition of our epistemological limits and a resultant stance of "epistemic humility" (Murray, 2010). The great philosopher and religious scholar Huston Smith superbly summarized our situation and this stance in the last sentence of his autobiography, published on his 90th birthday: "We are born in mystery, we live in mystery, and we die in mystery" (Smith, 2010, p. 196). This is Zen's "don't know mind," and as usual, Lao Tzu put the idea succinctly, "From wonder into wonder Existence opens" (Bynner, 1944, p. 25). Clearly, one key facet of existential insight and wisdom is the recognition of how little we can know and understand, and of the ineluctable mystery of life.

The general principle underlying the definition and emphasis on *deep accurate insight and understanding of oneself and the central existential issues of life* is that, in the words of a classic Jewish wisdom text, "Wisdom comes from knowing reality" (Shapiro, 1993, p. 30). Other traditions agree and for Buddhists, "Wisdom (*paññā*) is ultimately a profound understanding of reality" (Gerhards, 2007, p. 37).

Responses to Existential Challenges

All of us face these existential challenges. However, existentialists, contemplatives, and many psychotherapists agree that most people defend, both individually and collectively, against recognizing their full implications and the angst they generate (Yalom, 1980). The result is a "falling" (Heidegger) into an unreflective superficiality and conventionality that contemplatives describe as, for example, an illusion, trance, or dream (Tart, 2001). Likewise, existentialists describe this trance as "automation conformity" (Fromm), "mass existence" (Jaspers), "bad faith" (Sartre), and "inauthenticity" (Heidegger; Cooper, 1990). The result is a defensive ignorance which is the opposite of epistemic wisdom.

As an antidote, existentialists therefore recommend a defenseless openness to our existential condition through an attitude of courage (Tillich), authenticity and resoluteness (Heidegger), and inner heroism (Yalom, 1980). The resultant discomfort or angst is the price of authenticity, freedom, postconventional maturation, and wisdom (Cooper, 1990; Wilber, 2000). Contemplatives agree with the existentialist recommendation of openness to reality, but also add contemplative practices to further investigate, reflect, and meditate on our existential condition and its implications, and they regard the insights and understandings that emerge as essential for wisdom (Walsh, 2014c; Wilber, 2006).

Of course, in the end, each of us faces the personal challenge of deciding how to respond to existential issues. This is the central and inescapable koan or conundrum that epistemic wisdom ponders and to which practical wisdom responds.

Practical Wisdom

Recognizing our existential challenges is necessary but not sufficient for full wisdom. For we must respond to life's challenges, and a sage displays *skillful benevolent responsiveness.* This allows us to define practical wisdom as follows:

> Practical wisdom is skillful benevolent responsiveness to the central existential issues of life.

Skillful

The term "skillful" has two meanings—derived from Western and Buddhist psychologies respectively—both of which are directly relevant to the nature and definition of wisdom. The Western meaning implies expertise or mastery (Ericsson, Prietula, & Cokely, 2007). However, Buddhism defines an action as skillful (*kusala*) to the extent that it reduces suffering and enhances wellbeing for everyone, including oneself (Thanissaro, 2003, II: 19, p. 3–4). Together, these meanings imply that wisdom involves expertise in reducing suffering and enhancing wellbeing for both oneself and others.

The meaning of *skillful* as expertise implies that practical wisdom is a skill, and as such can be practiced and developed. A sage would therefore be someone who had developed this skill to high levels of expertise and mastery.

As a skill, practical wisdom may therefore follow the general principles of skill acquisition and performance common to other behavioral skills (Ericsson et al., 2007). For example, considerable research suggests that acquiring high levels of expertise for any skill—from athletics to chess to music to medicine—requires five specific conditions: careful deliberate practice, regular performance assessment and error correction, guided by expert coaching, and sustained over long periods of time (Ericsson, Charness, Faltovich, & Hoffman, 2006).

These five conditions suggest principles and practices for training people in practical wisdom. And in fact those principles and practices are clearly evident in the world's major "wisdom schools": the world's contemplative disciplines. Here, the student's first task is to find an authentic teacher—a guru, guide, or master—who has already developed high levels of wisdom and other desired virtues (Caplan, 2011). The Jewish advice for those who would develop wisdom that "There is nothing more important than . . . becoming a disciple of a true *tzaddik*" (teacher; Buxbaum, 2005, p. 667) is a common contemplative theme. Then follow years of instruction, practice, feedback, and correction—the same methods necessary for acquiring other kinds of expertise—but in this case aimed specifically at cultivating wisdom and other virtues (Brown, 2006; Goleman, 1977).

What Makes a Response Skillful?

Wisdom in general, and practical wisdom in particular, require skillful benevolent responsiveness to the central existential issues of life. Sagacity not only seeks and sees how to act benevolently, but also possesses the requisite skill to do so.

What does this require? First the ability to recognize responses that are contextually appropriate for the specific situation and people. This is analogous to Baltes and Staudinger's (2000) argument that contextualism is a criterion for wisdom. Such responses will be sensitive to such things as the nature of the relationship, the social and cultural context, and also people's psychological needs and capacities.

Confucianism sees such responses as examples of *yi*: a term which connotes both appropriateness and righteousness and is closely linked to wisdom. In fact, the sage Mencius (372–289 BCE) declared that wisdom is to "understand what is appropriate" (Mencius 4a.27, cited in Yu, 2006, p. 343). The Confucian ideal is "to weigh circumstances and find the perfect balance, behaving precisely as demanded by the particular circumstances" (Gardner, 2007, p. 108).

In addition, the general definition makes clear that both epistemic and practical wisdom depend on self-knowledge. Only by knowing ourselves deeply and accurately can we recognize and live in accord with both our unique character and capacities and our deeper universal nature (Kohn, 2014). In the terms of Indian philosophy, only by recognizing our *svabhava* (unique being) can we recognize our *svadharma* (unique life path) and the responses that are appropriate for us in each situation (Radhakrishnan, 1989).

Contemplative teaching offers specific examples of such appropriateness. Contemplative teachers—who ideally have cultivated considerable wisdom themselves—are expected to match teachings to the psychological and spiritual maturity of students. This is an ancient idea, and 1,400 years ago Muhammad urged, "Speak to men according to their mental capacities" (Syed, 1969, p. 85). In Eastern orthodox Christianity, an *abba* or sage "is expected to acquire the 'gift of discernment,' the ability to spiritually intuit the struggles and needs of the person who seeks advice" (Dysinger, 2014, p. 45). Likewise, in Islamic Sufism, students are tested before being accepted as full-fledged students, and Tibetan Buddhism offers a carefully graded sequence of *yanas* (paths) in which teachers keep advanced meditations and teachings secret until students are able to appreciate and practice them effectively (Powers, 1995). So one crucial aspect of practical wisdom is the ability to discern appropriate responses.

Such responses require a humble recognition of our existential limits. *Agential humility* recognizes that there are some things we simply cannot change (Tiberius, 2010). *Epistemic humility* recognizes that we can never know all the factors at play in a situation (Murray, 2010). Finally, what we might call *predictive humility* recognizes the uncertainty of the final outcome and all the ramification of our actions. To deny these existential limits is to live unwisely in defensive "bad faith" (Yalom, 1980), and Maria Taranto (1989) concluded that "wisdom involves a recognition of and response to human limitation" (p. 15).

But even recognizing what is appropriate is not enough. Also required are the personal and interpersonal skills to actually perform the act appropriately. As Aristotle put it "*Arete* [virtue] ensures the rightness of the end we aim at, and practical wisdom makes use of the right means" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144a 8–9).

Taoism contains many stories of sages demonstrating this kind of effectiveness (Merton, 1965). In this tradition the key is said to be a deep intuitive attunement to one's own nature and the world which results in egoless, effortless spontaneity (*wu wei*). Such actions are said to be both appropriate to the situation and in harmony with one's Self and the cosmos (Kohn, 2014).

Wise discernment will also recognize and offer those responses that foster deep maturation. For example, in Buddhism, the most profound and valued form of practical wisdom is *upaya*, skill in fostering wisdom and other virtues, and eventually enlightenment (Ray, 2000).

Benevolence

How do wise people respond to life's existential challenges? Crucially, they respond *benevolently*. Notice that benevolence refers primarily to intentions, and there is a broad agreement across both East and West that a central intention of the wise is to benefit people by reducing suffering and enhancing wellbeing (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Kalton, 2014; Sternberg, 1998).

Insight and understanding can enhance personal power and practical intelligence, but these capacities can then be used for purely egocentric goals (Sternberg, 1998). Yet a cross-culturally agreed on characteristic of the wise is that they have largely outgrown egocentricity and that their motives are primarily altruistic (Ardelt, 2008; Walsh, 2014a). Consequently, they are deeply and altruistically concerned with the wellbeing of others and moved to seek the common good (Dysinger, 2014).

Many contemplative traditions regard wisdom and benevolence as inextricably linked. For the Dalai Lama (2012), wisdom and

compassion are "like the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a cart, for the bird cannot fly and the cart cannot roll with only one" (p. xvii). In fact, in Buddhism, compassion and *all* virtues are said to flower fully only when informed by *prajna* (transconceptual wisdom that sees deeply into the nature of reality; Ray, 2000).

Likewise, in Confucianism, a sage unites "penetrating wisdom and all-embracing benevolence . . . in fact wisdom is nothing but knowing the way of benevolence" (Sung-hae, 1992, pp. 61, 62). The central virtue of Confucianism is benevolence (*ren*) which is regarded as "the most important moral quality a man can posses" (Lau, 1979, p. 4), and it is intimately linked to wisdom "like two wings, one supporting the other" (Chan, 1963, p. 30).

There is initial experimental support for a relationship between wisdom and altruism. Wisdom nominees were actively involved in mentoring (Krafcik, 2015), and scored higher than creative nominees or controls on a measure of concern for humanity as a whole (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990). Similarly, high scorers on Monika Ardelt's (2008) wisdom scale displayed lives "directed toward the benefit of all beings rather than only themselves and their loved ones" (p. 231). However, this is not surprising given that the scale selects for prosocial motives.

Benevolence is central to ethics, and this suggests that wisdom is also linked to ethics. This is hardly a new idea, and more than 2,000 years ago Aristotle claimed that "it is impossible to be practically wise without being good" (Aristotle, 2009, p. 116, 1144a, 35). In fact, an intention or action can be considered ethical to the extent that it aims to enhance the wellbeing of everyone, including oneself (Walsh, 1999). Therefore, what I am suggesting here—and even embedding into the definition of wisdom—is that wisdom, benevolence, and ethics are strongly overlapping and interdependent virtues.

This link between ethics and wisdom is widely recognized across contemplative and religious traditions. Ethical living is seen as a foundational practice for cultivating wisdom, and wisdom then finds expression in ethical living and benevolence (Walsh, 1999). For example, the *Wisdom of Solomon* emphasizes that "wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul" (1:4, NRSV), while Mohammed warned that "greed steals away wisdom" (Angha, 1995, p. 70). Likewise for Confucianism, "virtue and wisdom are intimately related in the formation of the Sage" (Sung-hae, 1992, p. 63). In fact, Mencius saw wisdom as "the fully developed form of our innate sense of right and wrong" (Kalton, 2014, p. 161).

So a central intention of the wise is to be benevolent. But how benevolent? I want to suggest the following hypothesis: *The degree of wisdom is correlated with the scope and depth of benevolence*. That is, the wiser people are, the greater the number of people and creatures they will seek to benefit, and the deeper the kind of benefit they will seek to offer.

This proposed link between the maturity of wisdom and the scope of benevolence is part of a general development principle. Multiple sources—such as contemplative traditions and contemporary studies of ego, moral, and faith development—suggest that increasing psychological maturity is associated with expanding awareness, care, and compassion (Singer, 2011; Wilber, 2006). That is, mature people tend to be more aware of, and concerned for, more people and even more sentient creatures. The developmental trajectory is from concern with *me* to *us* to *all of us*, or as Carol Gilligan (1993) put it, from *selfish* to *care* to *universal care*. In neo-Kohlbergerian terms, this is the growth of moral concern from *personal interest* to *social norms* to *postconventional* (Thoma, 2006), or from *egocentric* to *ethnocentric* to *worldcentric* (Wilber, 2006). The general process is one in which "Prosocial reasoning begins then, in a fog of hedonism and egotism, but then expands to take an ever-widening social perspective" (Lapsley, 2006, p. 56). The implication of developmental research, and of the definition being advanced here, is that the maturity of wisdom will be reflected in the scope of concern, compassion, and benevolence.

This raises the question of how we can assess the degree of benevolence. Three dimensions seem crucial: spatial, temporal, and maturational.

The spatial dimension refers to the span of concern: that is, to the breadth of one's circle of care and the number of people and conscious creatures included in it (Kalton, 2014). This breadth grows developmentally in an "ever widening social radius" (Erik Erikson) and "expanding circle of concern" (Singer, 2011) from childhood egocentricity (where concern extends only to oneself) to *ethnocentricity* (where it extends to one's clan or country) to *transpersonal* levels (where span can encompass all conscious life; Wilber, 2001a). For the psychoanalyst Kohut (1978), maturation and wisdom culminate in "supraindividual ideals" and "cosmic narcissism."

If the maturity of wisdom and of benevolence are linked, then the wiser the person, the wider will be the span of care and concern. Preliminary evidence is supportive because elders displaying gerotranscendence as well as wisdom nominees and high scorers on wisdom scales are, in fact, more concerned with humanity as a whole (Ardelt, 2008; Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990; Tornstam, 2011).

The second measure of benevolence is temporal: the rippling effects of actions across years and generations (Kalton, 2014). Here the hypothesis is that the wiser people are, the more they will consider, recognize, and optimize the long-term effects of their actions.

This principle is beautifully expressed in the Native American emphasis on considering the welfare of "the seventh generation." "One of the first mandates given us as chiefs" wrote one Native American leader, is to "make every decision that we make relate to the welfare and well-being of the seventh generation to come. . . . Where are you taking them? What will they have?" (Lyons, 1994, p. 173).

The third dimension and measure of benevolence is psychological maturity or developmental depth. However, maturity is a self-demanding capacity. One's ability to see, and see what will foster, maturity and mature wellbeing—in both oneself and others—depends on one's own maturity (Wilber, 2006). This is a variant of the idea of "*adaequatio*": that what one can recognize depends on one's learning, development, and resultant adequacy (Schumacher, 1977).

There are two assumptions here. One is that wisdom is a function of development. The second is that the wise will recognize and seek to optimize more mature kinds of wellbeing. In other words, they will aim to enhance not only general happiness—the simple utilitarian aim—but also deeper kinds and sources of wellbeing including greater growth and maturity. This focus on maturation therefore emphasizes, once again, the importance of levels of development for both the nature of wisdom and its expression.

To summarize, a central hypothesis linking wisdom and benevolence is this: The wiser people are, the greater the number of people and creatures they seek to benefit, the greater the time span they consider, and the deeper the kinds of benefit they seek to offer.

Buddhism offers a lofty example of this in its ideal archetype of the *Bodhisattva*: a would-be Buddha seeking the highest good and enlightenment for self and all others. For example, in Hua Yen Buddhism, this expanded scope of concern culminates in the recognition of total interdependence: that all phenomena are mutually interdependent, and that all actions may touch all. This recognition "acts as a moral imperative, leaving the truly moral being with no option but to act in accordance with this reality" (Cook, 1973, p. 118). A Bodhisattva therefore seeks to develop an understanding of universal interdependence, and then to express that understanding by serving the deepest wellbeing and awakening of all conscious creatures (Ray, 2000).

Experimental Testing of Benevolence

How can we experimentally test the hypothesis that greater wisdom will be associated with greater amounts, scope, temporal span, and depth of benevolence? One way is to investigate concern with the planet as a whole and with humanity as a whole (e.g., Ardelt, 2008; Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990; Tornstam, 2011) as compared with concern for only one's own personal locale or ethnocentric group. Objective measures could be obtained by correlating wisdom score with, for example, percentage of income donated to charities, and the extent to which these charities focus on global, long-term concerns as opposed to local, short-term ones. Further experiments might assess correlations between wisdom scores and the extent of mentoring (Krafcik, 2015) and whether mentoring aims at conventional goals such as financial success or postconventional goals such as eudaimonia.

Beyond Selfishness and Sacrifice: Benevolence as Enlightened Self-Interest

Wisdom seeks the deep wellbeing, not just of oneself (that would be selfishness), and not just of others (that would be sacrifice). Rather, as Sternberg (1998) points out, wisdom seeks the balanced optimization of wellbeing for both self and others. It does this for several reasons.

First, because it recognizes that both selfishness and sacrifice can create suffering for oneself and also for others. Selfishness reinforces painful, destructive motives and emotions such as greed and jealousy within oneself, creates conflict and ill will with others, and runs counter to the recognition of interdependence (Kalton, 2014; Ray, 2000). On the other hand, unbalanced compassionate action can easily feel like sacrifice, and then result in burnout and resentment (Walsh, 1999). Buddhist wisdom therefore emphasizes that compassion must be balanced with joy and equanimity (Longchenpa, 1975, p. 108).

Second, wisdom seeks the wellbeing of both self and others because it recognizes that benevolence and service can be deeply satisfying, self-actualizing, and self-transcending. In fact, the world's contemplative traditions see service as both a means to, and also an expression of, deep wisdom, wellbeing, awakening, and joy (Hopkins, 2001). For them, service is both a means for maturation and awakening, and also a natural joyful expression of maturation and awakening (Walsh, 1999). For example, altruistic service is said to reduce painful, unhealthy mental qualities such as greed and jealousy, while fostering healthy qualities such as love, joy, and generosity (Hopkins, 2001). As Confucianism emphasizes "we flourish most deeply by attending to the flourishing of others" (Kalton, 2014, p. 178).

Contemporary research and theory agree about the benefits of benevolence (Post, 2007). Altruists may experience a "helpers-high," and the so-called "paradox of happiness" is that spending time and resources on others can create more happiness than spending them on oneself (Walsh, 2011b). Multiple studies—including those controlling for prior health—suggest that people who volunteer more are happier, healthier, and may even live longer (Borgonovi, 2008; Grimm, Spring, & Dietz, 2007; Post, 2007). Benevolent service to others has long been considered essential for a life well-lived. Now it can also be considered essential for health, maturity, and wisdom.

Transpersonal Levels of Wisdom and Benevolence

Wisely perceived, altruism is therefore not self-sacrifice, but rather enlightened self-interest (Walsh, 1999). As the Dalai Lama put it, "if you're going to be selfish, be wisely selfish—which means to love and serve others, since love and service to others bring rewards to oneself that otherwise would be unachievable" (Hopkins, 2001, p. 150).

Yet even this recognition does not encompass the highest grades of either wisdom or benevolence. For contemplative traditions emphasize that at the transpersonal heights of maturity and wisdom, the illusory, constructed nature of the usual self-sense is recognized, and one's deep unity with others is appreciated (Walsh, 2014a).

These are the classic "unitive experiences" so highly prized by contemplatives around the world (Underhill, 1999). Western psychologists periodically rediscover these unitive experiences and their benefits. Classic examples include, for example, William James's "cosmic consciousness," Carl Jung's "numinous experience," Abraham Maslow's "peak experience," Erich Fromm's "at-onement," and Stan Grof's "holotropic" and "transpersonal" experiences (Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). Foretastes of this unity can also occur during gerotranscendence (Tornstam, 2011). Jung (1955) was careful to emphasize that "It is chiefly our ignorance of the psyche if these experiences appear 'mystic'" (p. 535). In China, a central question is: What is the best life? "According to Chinese philosophers, it is nothing less than being a sage, and the highest achievement of a sage is the identification of the individual with the universe" (Fung, 1948, p. 6).

In these unitive experiences, the experiential divide between self and others fades, interconnection is recognized, and service is therefore experienced, not as sacrifice nor even as simply enlightened self-interest. Rather, service is now experienced as a natural, joyful expression of one's deep identity, and the result is what Christian contemplatives call a "unitive life" lived in the service of all (Underhill, 1999). The *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of Hinduism's most revered texts, claims that for such people "Their every action is wed to the welfare of fellow creatures" (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1972, p. 61).

Likewise, in Buddhism, "the defining nature of great compassion is that it 'does not distinguish between self and others.' In the Great Compassion of a bodhisattva, self-benefit and other-benefit are therefore the same" (Park, 1983, p. 99). As Ramana Maharshi (1988)—one of Hinduism's greatest 20th century sages—put it, "All that you give, you give to yourself. If this truth is understood, who will not give to others" (p. 8).

In summary, it seems possible to recognize a developmental progression of wisdom insights, benevolent motives, and the relationship between them. Wisdom seeks to benevolently enhance the wellbeing of others because it sees such actions, first as appropriate moral responses to suffering, next also as expressions of enlightened self-interest, and finally also as natural expressions of our deep identity and interconnection with others.

This sagacious recognition that benevolence is an appropriate and skillful response to others may be an example of a larger principle linking wisdom, ethics, and other virtues. Several contemplative traditions emphasize, not only the inseparability of wisdom and ethics, but also that wise people recognize ethics and other virtues as both appropriate, skillful responses to reality and as natural expressions of deep identity (Walsh, 2014a). For example, in Buddhism, "Morality is nothing but the practical expression of right understanding" (Govinda, 1976, p. 70), whereas in Islam "virtuous action is the outward embodiment of a particular mode of wisdom" (Shah-Kazemi, 2014, p. 64). For the wise, benevolent and ethical behaviors may reflect their insights into reality and self as well as the resultant wisdom. Benevolence and ethicality may therefore seem appropriate, skillful ways of living.

In summary, this review suggests that the wiser people are, the more deeply and accurately they may see into themselves, reality, and our existential challenges and limitations. The more they see and understand, the more ethicality and benevolence may seem appropriate ways to live, the more motivated they may be to benefit others, the deeper the kinds of benefits they may offer, and the more skillfully they may offer them.

Emotional Homeostasis: Intrinsic Aspect of Wisdom or Separate Virtue?

Many researchers suggest that emotional regulation skills are important for wisdom (Aldwin, 2009; Staudinger & Glück, 2011). After all, a sage "is more than a 'hyper-logic' machine" (Taranto, 1989, p. 14). Some researchers go further and include emotional regulation or homeostasis as part of their definition of wisdom (Bangen et al., 2013), thereby implying that it is an intrinsic element of wisdom (e.g., Ardelt, 2008). However, what specific aspects of emotional regulation are important for what kinds of sagacity, whether it affects wisdom's acquisition or expression or both, and how it does so, are left unspecified. By contrast, the definitions in this article specifically omit emotional regulation because several kinds of evidence, explicated below, suggest that emotional regulation and wisdom are mutually facilitating but distinct virtues.

Emotional regulation is a complex skill which usually implies the capacity to reduce negative emotions and enhance positive prosocial ones (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). Several religious and contemplative traditions—such as Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and Confucian—agree that negative emotions such as anger can hinder the acquisition and expression of wisdom whereas positive emotions such as love and compassion can foster it. However, love and compassion are regarded as distinct virtues in their own right, and wisdom can be cultivated separately from them (Brown, 2006; Shah-Kazemi, 2002; Walsh, 2014a).

There is another important capacity of emotional regulation which is clearly linked to wisdom. This capacity is equanimity, which I define as the ability to experience provocative stimuli fully and nondefensively without psychological disturbance.

Equanimity has been little recognized in Western psychology except for occasional mention of related abilities such as "affect tolerance," "experience tolerance," and "emotional resilience" (Kramer, 1993). However, in the world's philosophies and contemplative disciplines, equanimity is widely valued as a major virtue. In Western philosophy, equanimity's high esteem goes back as far as the pre-Socratic Heraclitus (2001) who held that "To be even minded is the greatest virtue" (p. 71). The Stoics with their *apatheia* as well as the Epicureans and Pyrrhonists with their *ataraxia* agreed (Lebell, 1995).

Contemplatives and Eastern philosophers agree too. For example, in the West, the early Christian Desert Fathers sought divine *apatheia* (Merton, 1961), and Hassidic Jews sought *hishtavut*: an imperturbability which they regarded as "the highest level of piety and its desired end" (Kaplan, 1982, p. 144). In the East, Buddhists classify equanimity as one of the essential "seven factors of enlightenment," and Hindus regard *samatva* (evenness) as essential for yoga (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1972). Aurobindo (1922), who was one of India's greatest philosophers and widely regarded as a sage, described it as "the characteristic temperament of the sage" (p. 171). Experimental support comes from studies of advanced Buddhist meditators who display dramatic reductions in emotional reactivity and startle response (Walsh, 2014c).

The interconnection of wisdom with other virtues—such as equanimity and nonattachment—is to be expected given the venerable ideas that virtues are interdependent and complementary. For example, the Stoic idea of *antakolouthia*: "that every virtue requires other virtues to complete it . . . was a fundamental tenet of much Greek philosophy" (Murphy, 1992, p. 558). So equanimity—together with the capacity for emotional regulation—has long been a highly valued virtue across the world and has been explicitly linked to wisdom.

However, the question remains whether emotional regulation in general and equanimity in particular are inherent elements of wisdom or rather are facilitating virtues. Several lines of evidence—contemplative, trans-cultural, philosophical, and phenomenological—suggest that they are distinct virtues. For example, as the previous discussion demonstrates, many philosophers and contemplatives of East and West have esteemed, and even devoted their lives to cultivating, both equanimity and wisdom, while viewing them as mutually facilitating, yet different and distinct, virtues. Moreover, there are multiple meditations and other contemplative practices that selectively focus on cultivating either equanimity, positive emotions, or wisdom separately, again suggesting that they are distinct (Walsh, 1999, 2014c). In addition, Buddhist psychology recognizes "The coarising of positive mental factors" meaning that positive mental qualities such as love and wisdom tend to arise at the same time. However, these mental qualities are experienced phenomenologically as quite distinct (Bodhi, 1993). Consequently, emotional regulation and equanimity may be two of many psychological capacities and virtues that

facilitate and complement wisdom (Bodhi, 1993), but are not actually constituent of it or essential for defining it.

This distinction reflects a repetitive problem in sagacity research. Researchers recognize the importance of diverse virtues—such as nonattachment, emotional regulation, or compassion—for the full flourishing and expression of wisdom (e.g., Aldwin, 2009; Ardelt, 2004; Taranto, 1989). However, they then conclude that these qualities must be intrinsic to wisdom, rather than recognizing them as distinct virtues that facilitate and complement wisdom.

Are Parts of Wisdom "Over Our Heads"?

The idea that at least some aspects of wisdom may be intimately linked to postconventional developmental stages holds important implications. First, as we have discussed, any definition needs to incorporate a developmental perspective. The second implication is far more sobering.

Each new developmental stage enacts new capacities, insights, and understandings (Wilber, 2006) that are unavailable to earlier stages and are experienced, if recognized at all, as metaphorically "over our heads" (Kegan, 1994). If certain aspects of wisdom are tied to postconventional, or even transconventional, developmental stages (Kramer, 2003; Walsh, 2011a), then the sobering implication is that the full meaning and significance of sagacity may not be fully available to those of us at earlier stages. Like certain other postconventional insights and perspectives, aspects of sagacity may be "over our heads" (Kegan, 1994).

This has long been a theme of contemplative disciplines. These disciplines claim that certain sapiential insights occur primarily in specific transpersonal states of consciousness and postconventional stages of development. The result is "supramundane wisdom" (Case, 2013), which is only partly comprehensible to people without direct experience of these states and stages (Tart, 1972). For example, "It is axiomatic in the yogic tradition that 'knowledge is different in different states of consciousness'" (Shearer, 1989, p. 26).

In Western terms, certain kinds of insight and understanding are state-specific and stage-specific (Tart, 1972; Walsh, 2014c). Without these state and stage-specific experiences, some of the "higher grades of significance" (deeper meanings) of wisdom may remain what Immanuel Kant called "empty concepts" (Schumacher, 1977). In contemplative terms, certain aspects of wisdom may remain "self-secret" (Tibetan Buddhism) or *sod* (hidden, Judaism) until one takes up practices that "open the eye of contemplation" (Christianity) and develops the requisite epistemic *adaequatio* (Walsh, 2011a; Wilber, 2001b). As Schumacher (1977) described the dilemma, "When the level of the knower is not adequate to the level or grade of significance of the object of knowledge, the result is not factual error but something much more serious: an inadequate and impoverished view of reality" (p. 42). In short, wisdom may be what we might call a "self-demanding capacity" which—like intelligence, mindfulness, or maturity—requires itself to fully comprehend itself.

The self-demanding nature of wisdom has not yet been tested experimentally but in principle could be. For example, Zen masters routinely use koans to test their students' comprehension of transconceptual wisdom (Miura & Fuller Sasaki, 1965). Likewise, studies are beginning on developmental differences in the understanding of postconventional ideas (Stein, 2010).

Several researchers have reported that undertaking relevant practices and obtaining direct experiences of related phenomena such as mindfulness, meditation, and altered states of consciousness enhanced their understanding of the phenomena and then their ability to research them and apply them clinically (Germer & Siegel, 2012; Tart, 1972; Walsh, 2014c). This suggests that the same may also be true of wisdom.

Consequently, as we seek to better understand and define wisdom, it will be important to acknowledge that there may be developmentally deeper insights and understandings awaiting our discovery. The crucial implication—one explicitly suggested by multiple contemplative traditions—is that to fully grasp the profundity and meaning of wisdom, we need to cultivate it ourselves.

References

Abelson, R. (2006). Definition. In D. Borchert (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of philosophy* (2nd ed., Vol. 2, pp. 664–677). Detroit, MI: Thomson/Gale.

Aldwin, C. (2009). Gender and wisdom. *Research in Human Development, 6,* 1–8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15427600902779347

Angha, N. (1995). *Deliverance: Words from the Prophet Mohammad*. San Rafael, CA: International Association of Sufism.

Ardelt, M. (2004). Wisdom as expert knowledge system: A critical review of a contemporary operationalization of an ancient concept. *Human Development, 47,* 257–285. http://dx.doi.org/10.1159/000079154

Ardelt, M. (2008). Self-development through selflessness. In H. Wayment & J. Bauer (Eds.), *Transcending self-interest* (pp. 221–233). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ardelt, M., Achenbaum, W., & Oh, H. (2014). The paradoxical nature of personal wisdom and its relation to human development in the reflective, cognitive and affective domains. In M. Ferrari & N. Westrate (Eds.), *Scientific study of personal wisdom* (pp. 265–295). New York, NY: Springer Press.

Aristotle. (2009). *Aristotle: The Nicomachean ethics* (D. Ross & L. Brown, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Assmann, A. (1994). Wholesome knowledge: Concepts of wisdom in a historical and cross-cultural perspective. In D. Featherman, R. Lerner, & M. Perlmutter (Eds.), *Lifespan development and behavior* (Vol. 12, pp. 188–224). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Aurobindo. (1922). *Essays on the Gita*. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

Aurobindo. (1970). *The life divine* (5th ed.). Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Baltes, P. B. (2004). *Wisdom as orchestration of mind and virtue*. Retrieved from http://library.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/ft/pb/PB_Wisdom_2004.pdf

Baltes, P. B., & Staudinger, U. M. (2000). Wisdom. A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence. *American Psychologist, 55,* 122–136. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.122

Bangen, K. J., Meeks, T. W., & Jeste, D. V. (2013). Defining and assessing wisdom: A review of the literature. *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 21,* 1254–1266. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jagp.2012.11.020

Bassett, C. (2011). Understanding and teaching practical wisdom. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2011,* 35–44. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ace.419

Beck, A., & Weishaar, M. (2011). Cognitive therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (9th ed., pp. 276–309). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Birren, J., & Svensson, C. (2005). Wisdom in history. In R. Sternberg & J. Jordan (Eds.), *A handbook of wisdom* (pp. 3–31). Cambridge,

UK: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511610486.002

Bodhi, B. (Ed.). (1993). *A comprehensive manual of Abhidhamma*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.

Borgonovi, F. (2008). Doing well by doing good. The relationship between formal volunteering and self-reported health and happiness. *Social Science & Medicine, 66,* 2321–2334. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2008.01.011

Brown, D. (2006). *Pointing out the great way: The stages of meditation in the Mahamudra tradition*. Boston, MA: Wisdom.

Brown, D. (2014, April). Talk given at Esalen Center, Big Sur, CA.

Brown, D., & Engler, J. (1986). The stages of mindfulness meditation. Part I: Study & results. In K. Wilber, D. Brown, & J. Engler (Eds.), *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and contemplative perspective on development* (pp. 161–190). Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Brugman, G. (2000). *Wisdom: Source of narrative coherence and eudaimonia*. Delft, The Netherlands: Eburon.

Buxbaum, Y. (2005). *Jewish spiritual practices*. Oxford, UK: Jason Aronson/Rowman & Littlefield.

Bynner, W. (1944/1980). *The way of life according to Lau Tzu*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Byrom, T. (2001). *The heart of awareness: A translation of the Ashtavakra Gita*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Cahn, B. R., & Polich, J. (2006). Meditation states and traits: EEG, ERP, and neuroimaging studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 132,* 180–211.

Caplan, M. (2011). *The guru question*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

Case, P. (2013). Cultivation of wisdom in the Theravadin Buddhist tradition. In W. Küpers & D. Pauleen (Eds.), *A handbook of practical wisdom* (pp. 65–78). Burlington, VT: Gawer.

Chan, W. (Ed.). (1963). *A sourcebook in Chinese philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Commons, M., & Richards, F. (2003). Four postformal stages. In J. Demick & C. Andreoletti (Eds.), *Handbook of adult development* (pp. 199–219). N. Y.: Springer.

Cook, F. (1973). *Hua Yen Buddhism*. New York, NY: University of Pennsylvania.

Cook-Greuter, S. (2010). Second-tier gains and challenges in ego development. In S. Esbjörn-Hargens (Ed.), *Integral theory in action* (pp. 303–321). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Cooper, D. (1990). *Existentialism*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Cooper, J. (2012). *Pursuits of wisdom: Six ways of life in ancient philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9781400842322

Corsini, R., & Wedding, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Current psychotherapies* (10th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Crockett, C. (2001). Aporia. In V. Taylor & C. Winquist (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of postmodernism*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Curnow, T. (1999). *Wisdom, intuition and ethics*. Abingdon, UK: Ashgate Publisher.

Dalai Lama. (2012). Foreword. In C. Germer & R. Siegel (Eds.), *Wisdom and compassion in psychotherapy* (pp. xvii–xviii). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Dogen. (1988). *Moon in a dewdrop*. Shaftsbury, VT: Element Books.

Dysinger, L. (2014). Wisdom in the Christian tradition. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 29–54). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Ericsson, K. A., Charness, N., Faltovich, P., & Hoffman, R. (Eds.). (2006). *The Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816796

Ericsson, K. A., Prietula, M. J., & Cokely, E. T. (2007). The making of an expert. *Harvard Business Review, 85,* 114–121, 193.

Ferrari, M., & Potworowski, G. (Eds.). (2008). *Teaching for wisdom: Cross-cultural perspectives on fostering wisdom*. Burlington, VT: Springer.

Ferrari, M., & Weststrate, N. (Eds.). (2014). *The scientific study of personal wisdom*. New York, NY: Springer.

Feuerstein, G. (1998). *The yoga tradition*. Prescott, AZ: Hohm Press.

Feuerstein, G. (2014). Wisdom: The Hindu experience and perspective. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 87–108). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Forman, R. (Ed.), (1990). *The problem of pure consciousness*. New York, NY: Oxford.

Fuhs, C. (2010). An integral map of perspective-taking. In S. Esbjörn-Hargens (Ed.), *Integral theory in action* (pp. 273–302). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Fung, Y. (1948). *A short history of Chinese philosophy* (D. Bodde, Trans.). New York, NY: Free Press/Macmillan.

Gardner, D. (1990). *Chu Hsi: Learning to be a sage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gardner, D. (2007). *The four books: The basic teachings of the later Confucian traditions*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Gerhards, P. (2007). *Mapping the dharma*. Vancouver, WA: Parami Press.

Germer, C., & Siegel, R. (Eds.). (2012). *Wisdom and compassion in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glück, J., König, S., Naschenweng, K., Redzanowski, U., Dorner, L., Straβer, I., & Wiedermann, W. (2013). How to measure wisdom: Content, reliability, and validity of five measures. *Frontiers in Psychology, 4,* 405. http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00405

Goldstein, J. (1987). *The experience of insight*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Goleman, D. (1977). *The varieties of the meditative experience*. New York, NY: Tarcher/Putnam.

Goleman, D. (1988). *The meditative mind*. Los Angeles, CA: J. P. Tarcher.

Govinda, A. (1976). *Creative meditation and multi-dimensional consciousness*. Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House.

Grimm, R., Spring, K., & Dietz, N. (2007). *The health benefits of volunteering: A review of recent research*. Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service.

Grof, S. (1993). *Realms of the human unconscious*. London, UK: Souvenir Press.

Gyamtso, K. T. (1986). *Progressive stages of meditation on emptiness* (S. Hookam, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Longchen Foundation.

Hall, T. (1988). *Too deep for words*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Harvey, A. (Ed.). (1996). *The essential mystics*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.

Hempel, S., & Shekelle, P. (2014). *Evidence map of mindfulness*. Los Angeles, CA: West Los Angeles Veterans Medical Center.

Heraclitus. (2001). *Fragments: The collected wisdom of Heraclitus* (B. Haxton, Trans.). New York, NY: Viking.

Holliday, S., & Chandler, M. (1986). *Wisdom: Explorations in adult competence*. Basel, Switzerland: Karger.

Hopkins, J. (2001). *Cultivating compassion*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

Jonte-Pace, D. (2004). The swami and the Rorschach: Spiritual practice, religious experience and perception. In R. Forman (Ed.), *The innate capacity: Mysticism, psychology and philosophy* (pp. 137–169). New York, NY: Oxford.

Jung, C. (1955). *Mysterium conjunctionis: Collected works of Carl Jung* (Vol. 14). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Kahneman, D. (2003). A perspective on judgment and choice: Mapping bounded rationality. *American Psychologist, 58,* 697–720. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.58.9.697

Kalton, M. (2014). The Confucian pursuit of wisdom. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 159–184). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Kaplan, A. (1982). *Meditation and Kabbalah*. New York, NY: Samuel Weisner.

Kaplan, A. (1985). *Jewish meditation: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Shoken Books.

Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kohn, L. (2014). Wisdom and the Tao. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 137–158). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Kohut, H. (1978/2011). *The search for the self. Vol. 1*: *Selected writings of Heinz Kohut, 1950–1978* (P. Ornstein, Ed.). New York, NY: International University Press.

Krafcik, D. (2015). Words from the wise: Exploring the lives, qualities, and opinions of wisdom exemplars. *Integral Review, 11,* 7–35.

Kramer, D. (2003). The ontogeny of wisdom in its variations. In J. Demick & C. Andreoletti (Eds.), *Handbook of adult development* (pp. 131–168). New York, NY: Plenum Press Publishers.

Kramer, P. (1993). *Listening to Prozac*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Küpers, W., & Pauleen, D. (Eds.). (2013). *A handbook of practical wisdom*. Burlington, VT: Gawer.

Lapsley, D. (2006). Moral stage theory. In M. Killen & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 37–66). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Assoc.

Lau, D. T. (Trans.). (1979). *Confucius: The analects*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Lebell, S. (1995). *Epictetus: The art of living*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco.

Levenson, M. R., Jennings, P. A., Aldwin, C. M., & Shiraishi, R. W. (2005). Self-transcendence: Conceptualization and measurement. *The International Journal of Aging & Human Development, 60,* 127–143. http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/XRXM-FYRA-7U0X-GRC0

Longchenpa. (1975). *Kindly bent to ease us, part I: Mind*. Emeryville, CA: Dharma.

Lyons, O. (1994). An Iroquois perspective. In C. Vecsey & R. Venables (Eds.), *American Indian environments* (2nd ed., pp. 171–174). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

MacLean, K. A., Ferrer, E., Aichele, S. R., Bridwell, D. A., Zanesco, A. P., Jacobs, T. L., . . . Saron, C. D. (2010). Intensive meditation training improves perceptual discrimination and sustained attention. *Psychological Science, 21,* 829–839. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797610371339

Maxwell, N. (2014). Wisdom: Object of study or basic aim of inquiry? In M. Ferrari & N. Weststrate (Eds.), *A scientific study of personal wisdom* (pp. 299–322). New York, NY: Springer.

McDermott, R. (2014). Wisdom in Western philosophy. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 185–212). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

McKee, P., & Barber, C. (1999). On defining wisdom. *The International Journal of Aging & Human Development, 49,* 149–164. http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/8G32-BNV0-NVP9-7V6G

Meeks, T. W., & Jeste, D. V. (2009). Neurobiology of wisdom: A literature overview. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 66,* 355–365. http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2009.8

Merton, T. (1961). *New seeds of contemplation*. New York, NY: New Directions.

Merton, T. (1965). *The way of Chuang Tzu*. New York, NY: New Directions.

Miura, I., & Fuller Sasaki, R. (1965). *The Zen koan*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Murphy, M. (1992). *The future of the body*. New York, NY: Tarcher/Putnam.

Murray, T. (2010). Exploring epistemic wisdom. In S. Esbjörn-Hargens (Ed.), *Integral theory in action* (pp. 345–368). New York, NY: SUNY.

Nyanaponika, T. (1976). *Abhidharma studies*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.

Orwoll, L., & Perlmutter, M. (1990). The study of wise persons. In R. Sternberg (Ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins and development* (pp. 160–178). New York, NY: University of Cambridge. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173704.009

Osbeck, L., & Robinson, D. (2005). Philosophical theories of wisdom. In R. Sternberg & J. Jordan (Eds.), *A handbook of wisdom* (pp. 61–83). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511610486.004

Park, S. (1983). *Buddhist faith and sudden enlightenment*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Popper, K. (1962). *The open society and its enemies* (Vol. 2). London, UK: Routledge & Kegan.

Post, S. (2007). *The science of altruism and health*. New York, NY: Oxford Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195182910.001.0001

Powers, J. (1995). *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.

Prabhavananda, S., & Isherwood, C. (1972). *The song of God: Bhagavad Gita* (3rd ed.). Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Society.

Radhakrishnan, S. (1989). *Indian philosophy* (Vol. 1). Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Ramana Maharshi. (1988). *The spiritual teachings of Ramana Maharshi*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Ray, R. (2000). *Indestructible truth: The living spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Rogerson, M. D., Gottlieb, M. C., Handelsman, M. M., Knapp, S., & Younggren, J. (2011). Nonrational processes in ethical decision making. *American Psychologist, 66,* 614–623. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0025215

Salovey, P., Mayer, J., & Caruso, D. (2002). The positive psychology of emotional intelligence. In C. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 159–171). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Schumacher, E. (1977). *A guide for the perplexed*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Shah-Kazemi, R. (2002). The notion and significance of *ma'rifa* in Sufism. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 13,* 155–181. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/j.is/13.2.155

Shah-Kazemi, R. (2014). The wisdom of gratitude in Islam. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 55–86). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Shapiro, R. (1993). *Wisdom of the Jewish sages: A modern reading of Pirke Avot* (pp. 5–28). New York, NY: Bell Tower.

Shapiro, R. (2014). Judaism and its wisdom literature. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 5–28). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Shapiro, S., & Carlson, L. (2009). *The art and science of mindfulness*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Shearer, P. (1989). *Effortless being: The yoga sutras of Patanjali*. London, UK: Unwin.

Singer, P. (2011). *The expanding circle: Ethics, evolution and moral progress*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Smith, H. (1958). *The religions of man*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Smith, H. (2010). *Tales of wonder: An autobiography*. New York, NY: HarperOne.

Stange, A., & Kunzmann, U. (2008). Fostering wisdom: A psychological perspective. In M. Ferrari & G. Potworowski (Eds.), *Teaching for wisdom* (pp. 23–36). Ann Arbor, MI: Springer.

Staudinger, U. (2014). The need to distinguish personal from general wisdom. In M. Ferrari & N. Westrate (Eds.), *A scientific study of personal wisdom* (pp. 3–20). New York, NY: Springer.

Staudinger, U. M., & Glück, J. (2011). Psychological wisdom research: Commonalities and differences in a growing field. *Annual Review of Psychology, 62,* 215–241. http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.121208.131659

Steele, S. (2014). *The pursuit of wisdom and happiness in education*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Stein, Z. (2010). Now you get it, now you don't: Developmental differences in the understanding of integral theory and practice. In S. Esbjorn-Hargens (Ed.), *Integral theory in action* (pp. 175–202). Albany, NY: SUNY.

Sternberg, R. (1998). A balance theory of wisdom. *Review of General Psychology, 2,* 347–365. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.4.347

Sternberg, R. (2003). *Wisdom, intelligence and creativity synthesized*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511509612

Sternberg, R. (2005). Older but not wiser? The relationship between age and wisdom. *Ageing International, 30,* 5–26. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF02681005

Sternberg, R., & Jordan, J. (Eds.). (2005). *A handbook of wisdom*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511610486

Sung-hae, K. (1992). The sage in Chinese tradition. *Inter-Religio, 22,* 61–68.

Syed, M. H. (1969). *Thus spake prophet Muhammad*. Madras, India: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

Taranto, M. A. (1989). Facets of wisdom: A theoretical synthesis. *The International Journal of Aging & Human Development, 29,* 1–21. http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/N76X-9E3V-P1FN-H8D8

Tart, C. T. (1972). States of consciousness and state-specific sciences. *Science, 176,* 1203–1210. http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.176.4040.1203

Tart, C. (2001). *States of consciousness* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: iUniverse.

Thanissaro, B. (2003). *Handful of leaves: Vol. 3. An anthology from the Anguttara Nikaya*. Valley Center, CA: Metta Forest Monastery.

Thoma, S. (2006). Research on the defining issues test. In M. Killen & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 67–91). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tiberius, V. (2010). *The Rosewood report on practical wisdom*. Retrieved from http://www.mcps.umn.edu/documents/RosewoodReport.pdf

Tornstam, L. (2011). Maturing into gerotranscendence. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 43,* 166–180.

Trowbridge, R. (2005). *The scientific approach to wisdom* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH.

Trowbridge, R. (2007). Wisdom and lifelong learning in the twenty-first century. *London Review of Education, 5,* 159–172. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14748460701440905

Trowbridge, R. (2010). *The wisdom companion*. Rochester, NY: Lulu.

Trowbridge, R. (2011). Waiting for Sophia: 30 years of conceptualizing wisdom in empirical psychology. *Research in Human Development, 8,* 149–164. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2011.568872

Trowbridge, R., & Ferrari, M. (2011). Special issue: Sophia and phronesis in psychology, philosophy, and traditional wisdom. *Research in Human Development, 8,* 89–94. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2011.568847

Underhill, E. (1999). *Mysticism*. Oxford, UK: Oneworld.

Vaillant, G. (2003). *Aging well*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Vazire, S., & Wilson, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbook of self-knowledge*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Venkatesananda (Trans.). (1984). *The concise Yoga Vasistha*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Walsh, R. (1999). *Essential spirituality: The seven central practices*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Walsh, R. (2011a). The varieties of wisdom: Contemplative, cross-cultural and integral contributions. *Research in Human Development, 8,* 109–127. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2011.568866

Walsh, R. (2011b). Lifestyle and mental health. *American Psychologist, 66,* 579–592. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0021769

Walsh, R. (2012). Wisdom: An integral view. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice, 7,* 1–21.

Walsh, R. (Ed.). (2014a). *The world's great wisdom*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Walsh, R. (2014b). The world's great wisdom: An integral overview. In R. Walsh (Ed.), *The world's great wisdom* (pp. 213–242). New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Walsh, R. (2014c). Contemplative psychotherapies. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (10th ed., pp. 411–460). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Walsh, R. (2015). Wise ways of seeing: Wisdom and perspectives. *Integral Review, 11,* 156–174.

Walsh, R., & Reams, J. (Eds.). (2015). Studies of wisdom. *Integral Review, 11*.

Walsh, R., & Shapiro, S. L. (2006). The meeting of meditative disciplines and Western psychology: A mutually enriching dialogue. *American Psychologist, 61,* 227–239. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.61.3.227

Wei-ming, T. (1993). Confucianism. In A. Sharma (Ed.), *Our religions* (pp. 141–227). San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco.

Wilber, K. (2000). *Integral psychology*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wilber, K. (2001a). *A theory of everything*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wilber, K. (2001b). *Eye to eye: The quest for the new paradigm* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wilber, K. (2006). *Integral spirituality*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wilber, K., Engler, J., & Brown, D. (Eds.). (1986). *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*. Boston, MA: New Science Library/Shambhala.

Wong, E. (1992). *Cultivating stillness*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wong, E. (1997). *The Shambhala guide to Taoism*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Yalom, I. (1980). *Existential psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Yao, X. (2006). Wisdom in comparative perspectives. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 33,* 319–321. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2006.00361.x

Yu, J. (2006). Yi: Practical wisdom in Confucius' Analects. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 33,* 335–348. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2006.00363.x

Received January 5, 2015
Revision received April 24, 2015
Accepted April 27, 2015 ■